THEATER MISSILE DEFENSE IN ASIA

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This paper represents the personal analysis and opinion of the author only and should not be construed as the views of The CNA Corporation. This is an update to an earlier paper prepared for the Woodrow Wilson Center in October 2000.

If at some point in the future the various TMD systems reach a mature state and are ready for incorporation into the U.S. armed forces then I suspect that they will be deployed to all U.S. forces.

It is probably true that future U.S. TMD programs have the potential to cause PLA planners to worry about the viability of their systems. But it is no secret that it is faster and cheaper to build more missiles than to build and buy more TMD systems. It is probably true that future U.S. TMD programs may cause PLA planners to worry about the viability of their systems...enmeshed in Taiwan domestic politics as the Legislative Yuan (LY) took up and debated the pros and cons of whether to...enact new laws and regulations that would have implications for TMD.

A third common misunderstanding is a function of the terminology used to describe TMD. Many mistakenly take the word TMD to mean that TMD will protect (cover) the entire "theater" of a unified command, such as PACOM or CENTCOM. Not so. The systems under discussion are far too small to...operate (in conjunction with...other command and control systems, etc.).

Second, discussing TMD usually means a technical discussion about a highly complex family of weapons systems and their operational implications. Discussions about these systems and their capabilities. My own understanding of these systems is rudimentary at best, but there are probably those knowledgeable enough to be worth pointing to.

Third, TMD is not an issue in any one region in the world. Rather, TMD has become an issue in Taiwan domestic politics; between some in the DPP and the former ruling KMT.

The use of missiles by Beijing were likely responsible in part for the U.S.'s dispatch of naval forces to the region and the subsequent deepening of the downturn in U.S.-China relations as a cycle of action and reaction spun about.

Moreover, and clearly worrisome to Beijing, because of the missile launches TMD became an attractive system to many in...of TMD programs. It is probably true that future U.S. TMD programs have the potential to cause PLA planners to worry about the viability of their systems...and made reporting about Chinese missiles, counting Chinese missiles, and studying Chinese missiles a popular pastime in China, Japan, and the United States.

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